

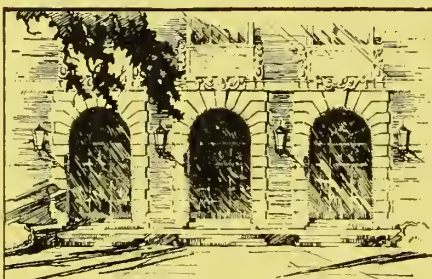
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PLAN FOR A PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PAXTON

by

ADA PATTON

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF LIBRARY SCIENCE  
IN THE STATE LIBRARY SCHOOL.

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.

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OF

Bachelor of Library Science

Katharine R. Sharp

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF

Library Science

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## PLAN FOR A PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PAXTON.

Paxton is the county seat of Ford county, Illinois and is the centre of one of the best prairie farming districts in the state. It is at the junction of the Illinois Central and Lake Erie & Western railroads. Its population is about 3500 and is gradually increasing. It has as many improvements (with one exception which we hope to show) as the average town of its size. The electric light, water, telephone and hot water heating systems are all good. The business part of the town is paved.

There are nine churches of different denominations in Paxton. The public school system compares very favorably with that of other Illinois towns of its size and the high school is exceptionally good. It has a four years' course and is accredited at the state and other universities. The high school building is good and well equipped. The streets are well laid out, well cared for and shaded by rows of fine old trees. While there are few fine residences there are almost no old, dilapidated houses and all the property is so well taken care of that the town as a whole has an appearance of neatness seldom met with.

Many of its most influential and wealthy citizens are retired farmers and land owners who have come there to secure the benefits of school and church for themselves and their families. There is no one manufacturing interest in Paxton extensive enough to make any certain class of people predominate; in fact definite class distinctions do not exist, the people being nearly all thrifty and industrious; few if any very wealthy and few very poor. A large

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proportion of the population is Swedish or of Swedish descent. They are intelligent, hard workers and take an interest in the improvement of the town and its educational affairs.

All of these things make Paxton almost an ideal place for a home, but with all its advantages it lacks one very important educational advantage. It has no free public library to supplement its public schools.

That every town must have a public school system and that the very best that it can support, has long been recognized as an established fact. Men pay more cheerfully than any other the tax to maintain their schools and educate their children, for they know that education means the raising of the standards of the community. By our laws children are compelled to attend school until fifteen years of age and although this law is sometimes evaded, nearly every child, at least learns to read. Nearly seventy-five per cent. of the children, however, do not go to school after they are twelve years of age. In small towns the per cent. is probably not so large but even there the number who go after they are fourteen is very small indeed. Of those who leave school between twelve and fourteen the majority have to earn their own living or perhaps help to support the family. What chance have they to continue the education that has been barely started in the public school? They have learned to read intelligently and have mastered the primary elements of the sciences. They have acquired a taste for good literature. Are they not to use the knowledge they have thus gained? It should not be forgotten "that it is not the ability to read, but the use made of that ability that contributes to the destiny of a child". The average home contains very little literature which is really good,



up-to-date and of use in self improvement. Of course if every child were like Abraham Lincoln he would in some way obtain the means of continuing his education; but we know that such is not the case. A majority of children have a taste for reading which, unless satisfied with the right kind of literature will either degenerate to a taste for cheap trashy novels or die out for want of use, according to the temperament and environment of the child.

A public library is as much a public institution as is a public school and should be maintained by the public for the same reasons. Since it is essentially open and free to all, making no distinctions of politics, religion, class, or condition it should be supported by the entire community. The fact that it is maintained by all the people and that any individual in the town has as much right there as another is one of the chief factors in the success of a public library. People are more likely to use a thing which has cost them some effort or expense, for unrestricted gifts to the public like unrestricted gifts to individuals are almost sure to be undervalued and abused. Mr. Carnegie and others who have made gifts to libraries, large or small, have recognized this principle and have stipulated that the recipients of their gifts shall do something for themselves.

The law of the state of Illinois, in regard to the establishment and maintenance of libraries by taxation has been very wisely made and has been a model for the laws of several other states. It is as follows:





## CHAPTER 81. LIBRARIES.

### OF CITIES, VILLAGES, TOWNS AND TOWNSHIPS.

#### SECTION.

1. Establishment by city—tax—fund.
2. Appointment of directors.
3. Term of office—removal.
4. Vacancies—compensation.
5. Organization—powers of directors—funds.
6. Who may use library.
7. Report of directors.
8. Council may fix penalties.
9. Donations.
10. Powers of villages, towns and townships.
11. Directors in villages, towns and townships.
12. Emergency.
13. Erection of buildings—plans—cost.
11. Duty of board—erection of building—investment of funds.
15. How contract to be let.
16. May rent a portion—borrow money—tax levy.

#### SECTION.

17. Library associations may sell, etc., to public library—meeting—notice.
18. Vote—manner of making conveyance, etc.

### CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

19. May erect public library on Dearborn Park—memorial hall.
20. Soldiers' Home in Chicago may sell, etc.

### INCORPORATION OF FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

21. Trustees may form corporation to establish.
22. Corporation—how formed.
23. Perfecting organization—corporate purposes.
24. Powers of corporation—whom members—property—taxation.

AN ACT to authorize cities, incorporated towns and townships to establish and maintain free public libraries and reading rooms. [Approved and in force March 7, 1872. L. 1871-2, p. 609.]

**1. ESTABLISHMENT BY CITY—TAX—FUND.]** § 1. That the city council of each incorporated city, whether organized under general law or special charter, shall have power to establish and maintain a public library and reading room, for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of such city, and may levy a tax of not to exceed two mills on the dollar annually on all the taxable property in the city: *Provided*, that in cities of over one hundred thousand inhabitants after the year 1895, such tax shall not exceed one-half of a mill on the dollar annually—such tax to be levied and collected in like manner with the general taxes of said city, and to be known as the library fund: *Provided*, that the said annual library tax in cities of over ten thousand inhabitants, shall not be included in the aggregate amount of taxes as limited by section one (1) of article eight (8) of "An act for the incorporation of cities and villages," approved April 10, 1872, and the amendatory acts thereto, or by any provision of any special charter under which any city in this State is now organized. [As amended by act approved March 26, 1891. In force July 1, 1891. L. 1891, p. 160; Legal News Ed., p. 111.]

**2. DIRECTORS.]** § 2. When any city council shall have decided to establish and maintain a public library and reading room, under this act the mayor of such city shall, with the approval of the city council, proceed to appoint a board of nine directors for the same, chosen from the citizens at large with reference to their fitness for such office; and not more than one member of the city council shall be at any one time a member of said board.

**3. TERM OF OFFICE—REMOVAL.]** § 3. Said directors shall hold office one-third for one year, one-third for two years, and one-third for three years, from the first of July following their appointment, and at their first regular meeting shall cast lots for the respective terms; and annually thereafter the mayor shall, before the first of July of each year, appoint as before three directors, to take the place of the retiring directors who shall hold office for three years, and until their successors are appointed. The mayor may by and with the consent of the city council, remove any director for misconduct or neglect of duty.

**4. VACANCIES—COMPENSATION.]** § 4. Vacancies in the board of directors, occasioned by removals, resignation, or otherwise, shall be reported to the city council, and be filled in like manner as original appointments, and no director shall receive compensation as such.

**5. ORGANIZATION—POWERS OF DIRECTORS—FUNDS.]** § 5. Said directors shall, immediately after appointment, meet and organize by the election of one of their number president, and by the election of such other officers as they may deem necessary. They shall make and adopt such by-laws, rules and regulations for their own guidance and for the government of the library and reading-room as may be expedient, not inconsistent with this act. They shall have the exclusive control of the expenditure of all moneys collected to the credit of the library fund, and of the construction [\*66 of any library building, and of the supervision, care and custody of the grounds, rooms



or buildings constructed, leased, or set apart for that purpose: *Provided*, that all moneys received for such library shall be deposited in the treasury of said city to the credit of the library fund, and shall be kept separate and apart from other moneys of such city, and drawn upon by the proper officers of said city, upon the properly authenticated vouchers of the library board. Said board shall have power to purchase or lease grounds to occupy, lease or erect an appropriate building or buildings for the use of said library; shall have power to appoint a suitable librarian and necessary assistants, and fix their compensation, and shall also have power to remove such appointees; and shall, in general, carry out the spirit and intent of this act, in establishing and maintaining a public library and reading-room.

**6. WHO MAY USE LIBRARY.] § 6.** Every library and reading-room, established under this act, shall be forever free to the use of the inhabitants of the city where located, always subject to such reasonable rules and regulations as the library board may adopt, in order to render the use of said library and reading-room of the greatest benefit to the greatest number; and said board may exclude from the use of said library and reading-room any and all persons who shall willfully violate such rules. And said board may extend the privileges and use of such library and reading-room to persons residing outside of such city in this state, upon such terms and conditions as said board may from time to time by its regulations prescribe. [As amended by act approved March 27, 1874. In force July 1, 1874.]

**7. REPORT OF DIRECTORS.] § 7.** The said board of directors shall make, on or before the second Monday in June, an annual report to the city council, stating the condition of their trust on the first day of June of that year, the various sums of money received from the library fund and from other sources, and how such moneys have been expended, and for what purposes; the number of books and periodicals on hand, the number added by purchase, gift, or otherwise, during the year; the number lost or missing; the number of visitors attending; the number of books loaned out, and the general character and kind of such books; with such other statistics, information and suggestions as they may deem of general interest. All such portions of said report as relate to the receipt and expenditure of money, as well [as] the number of books on hand, books lost or missing, and books purchased, shall be verified by affidavit.

**8. PENALTIES.] § 8.** The city council of said city shall have power to pass ordinances imposing suitable penalties for the punishment of persons committing injury upon such library or the grounds or other property thereof, and for injury to or failure to return any book belonging to such library.

**9. DONATIONS.] § 9.** Any person desiring to make donations of money, personal property or real estate for the benefit of such library, shall have the right to vest the title to the money or real estate so donated in the board of directors created under this act, to be held and controlled by such board, when accepted, according to the terms of the deed, gift, devise or bequest of such property; and as to such property the said board shall be held and considered to be special trustees.

**10. POWERS OF VILLAGES, TOWNS AND TOWNSHIPS.] § 10.** When fifty legal voters of any incorporated town, village or township shall present a petition to the clerk of the town, village or township (or trustee of schools in counties not under township organization,) asking that an annual tax may be levied for the establishment and maintenance of a free public library in such town or township, and shall specify, in their petition, a rate of taxation not to exceed two mills on the dollar, such clerk (or trustee of schools in counties not under township organization) shall, in the next legal notice of the regular annual election in such town or township, give notice that at such election every elector may vote "For a . . . mill tax for a free public library," or "Against a . . . mill tax for a free public library," specifying in such notice the rate of taxation mentioned in said petition; and if the majority of all the votes cast in such \*664] town, village or township shall be "For the tax for the free public library," the tax specified in such notice shall be levied and collected in like manner with other general taxes of said town or township, and shall be known as the "Library Fund": *Provided*, that such tax shall cease in case the legal voters of any such town, village or township shall so determine by a majority vote, at any annual election held therein; and the corporate authorities of such towns or villages may exercise the same powers conferred upon the corporate authorities of cities under this act.

**11. DIRECTORS IN VILLAGES, ETC.] § 11.** At the next regular election after any town, village or township shall have voted to establish a free public library, there shall



be elected a library board of six directors, one-third for one year, one-third for two years, one-third for three years, and annually thereafter there shall be elected two directors, who shall hold their office for three years and until their successors are elected and qualified; which board shall have the same powers as are by this act conferred upon the board of directors of free public libraries in cities.

**12. EMERGENCY.] § 12.** Whereas, all the libraries of Chicago were destroyed by the recent fire in that city, and large donations of books have been made to found a free library, and whereas no suitable building or organization exists to receive or preserve them, therefore an emergency exists that this law shall take effect immediately: therefore this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

**13. ERECTION OF BUILDING—PLANS—COST.] § 13.** Whenever any board of directors of any public library, organized under the provisions of the act to which this is an amendment, shall determine to erect a building to be used for their library, or to accumulate a fund for the erection of such building, they may do so as follows: The directors shall cause a plan for such building to be prepared, and an estimate to be made of its cost; they may then determine the time or years over which they will spread the collection of the cost of said building, not exceeding twenty (20) years, and shall make a record of their said proceedings and transmit a copy thereof to the city council for its approval.

If the council shall approve the action of the board the board shall divide the total cost of said building into as many parts as they shall determine to spread the cost of the collection thereof, and shall certify the amount of one of said parts to the city council, each and every year during the time or term over which they shall have determined to spread the collection of the cost of said building.

The city council on receiving the said last mentioned certificate shall in its next annual appropriation bill include the amount so certified, and shall levy and collect a tax to pay the same, with the other general taxes of the city: *Provided*, the said levy shall not exceed five (5) mills on the dollar in any one year and shall not be levied oftener than for the number of years into which the library board shall have divided the costs of said building: *And provided, further*, no city shall construct more than one building under the provisions of this act, and when said sum herein mentioned shall have been collected the said tax shall cease. [Added by act approved June 19, 1891. In force July 1, 1891. L. 1891, p. 154; Legal News Ed., p. 112.]

**14. DUTY OF BOARD—ERECTION OF BUILDING—INVESTMENT OF FUNDS.] § 14.** The library board shall determine when they will proceed with the construction of the building; they may proceed at once or may determine to wait and allow the fund to accumulate, but shall not delay construction of said building longer than for the collection of said fund. If they shall determine to wait, they shall certify their action to the city council and said city council shall invest said money in good interest paying securities, there to remain until the same is needed for the construction of the building under the provisions of this act. [Added by act approved June 19, 1891. In force July 1, 1891. L. 1891, p. 155; Legal News Ed., p. 112.]

**15. HOW CONTRACT TO BE LET.] § 15.** When the directors shall determine to commence the construction of the building they may then revise the plan therefor or adopt a new plan and provide estimates of the costs thereof, and shall advertise for bids for the construction of said building and shall let the contract to the lowest and best responsible bidder, and may require from such bidder securities for the performance of his bid as the board shall determine: *Provided*, the said directors may let the contract for one part of said building to one bidder, and for another part to another bidder as they shall determine: *And provided, further*, the board of directors shall not in any new plan increase the per cent. of the tax levy hereunder, without the approval of the city council. [Added by act approved June 19, 1891. In force July 1, 1891. L. 1891, p. 155; Legal News Ed., p. 112.]

**16. MAY RENT PORTION—BORROW MONEY—TAX LEVY.] § 16.** If the board of directors shall think best they may construct the building so that a portion thereof may be rented, and may at any time during the construction thereof borrow money and execute a mortgage on the lot and building, not exceeding one-half the value thereof, and the money so obtained shall be used exclusively in the completion of said building. The levy of a tax hereunder shall not constitute a part of the general tax of the city, nor shall it affect any appropriation made or to be made for the support of







the library. This act shall not apply to any city in this State having over one hundred thousand inhabitants. [Added by act approved June 19, 1891. In force July 1, 1891. L. 1891, p. 155; Legal News Ed., p. 112.]

AN ACT to enable library associations to sell and transfer their real and personal property. [Approved March 24, 1874. In force July 1, 1871.]

**17. LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS MAY SELL, ETC., TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES—MEETING—NOTICE.] § 1.** *Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly,* That whenever any library association organized under any law of this state, and owning any real or personal property in this state, shall desire to sell or lease the same, or any part thereof, absolutely or with conditions, to the board of directors of any free public library, organized under the laws of this state, such sale or lease may be made in the manner following, viz: the directors of such association shall call a meeting of all the members, subscribers or stockholders thereof, to be held at the rooms of said library or office of the secretary of such association, written or printed notice of the time, place and object of such meeting, and of the terms and conditions of the proposed sale or lease being first mailed, at least thirty (30) days prior to the time of such meeting, to the address of each member, subscriber or stockholder whose place of residence is known to any of the officers or directors of such association, and by publishing such notice for at least thirty (30) consecutive days next preceding the time of such meeting, in some newspaper published and of general circulation in the county where the property of said association is situate.

**18. VOTE—MANNER OF MAKING CONVEYANCE, ETC.] § 2.** If the members, subscribers or stockholders representing the majority in amount of the stock of such association, shall vote, at such meeting, in favor of such sale or lease upon the terms or conditions specified in such notice, or, in case said association shall consist of two or more departments, if a majority of the members, subscribers or stockholders of each department shall vote at such meeting in favor of such sale or lease so specified, then the president and secretary shall cause a record of the proceedings of such meeting, verified by the oath of the president thereof, together with an affidavit of the service or publication of notice as herein required, to be filed in the office of the clerk of the circuit court of the county where the property of such association is situate; after which the president and secretary of the said association shall be and are hereby authorized and empowered to execute any and all necessary deeds, leases, bills of sale, or other instruments in writing, to carry out the object and intent of said vote; which, when duly executed, shall be sufficient to pass to the board of directors of such free public library all the legal and equitable title of said associations in and to the real or personal property in said instrument described as therein set forth.

#### CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

AN ACT to authorize the Chicago public library to erect and maintain a public library on Dearborn Park in the city of Chicago, and to authorize the Soldiers' Home in Chicago to sell and dispose of its interest in the north one-quarter of the said park. [Approved June 2, 1891. In force July 1, 1891. L. 1891, p. 156; Legal News Ed., p. 113.]

WHEREAS, in the original subdivision of a tract of land in the west part of the south west fractional quarter of section ten, township 39 north, range 14, east of the third principal meridian, as subdivided and platted under the authority of the secretary of war in the year 1839, a square or tract of land in said subdivision, a part of which is known as Dearborn park, was set aside for park purposes, and was so dedicated by the general government:

AND, WHEREAS, the circumstances under which said dedication was made, no longer exist, so that said park can not be used or utilized for the purposes for which said dedication was made, the growth and development of business having now rendered it worthless for such purposes; therefore,

**19. MAY ERECT PUBLIC LIBRARY ON DEARBORN PARK—MEMORIAL HALL.] § 1.** *Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly,* That the Chicago public library be and it is hereby authorized to take possession of the piece of ground now known as Dearborn park, in that part of the city of Chicago, State of Illinois, known as the Fort Dearborn addition to Chicago, and bounded on the north by the south line of Randolph street, on the east by the west line of Michigan avenue, on the south by the north line of Washington street, on the west by the east line of an alley known as



Towns all over the state have been and are taking advantage of this law to secure public libraries. It applies to small towns as well as to large and there is no reason why those who live in a small town should not have an equal chance with any others of obtaining library material suited to their tastes and requirements.

As an example of what has been done by an Illinois town of about the same size and with somewhat the same conditions as Paxton, the library of Hoopeston may be cited. The following history of the establishment of the Hoopeston library is the substance of a letter from the librarian. The Woman's club of Hoopeston first originated the idea of a free public library. The first step was a plan to raise money. The Mary Hartwell Catherwood Club gave a "Ladies colored minstrel" show. Many plans for increasing the funds were tried, some of which were successful, others failures. The ladies canvassed the town to obtain subscriptions and in this way raised \$500. When the city hall was built a petition was sent to the mayor for a room in which to establish a library and the room was set aside for the purpose. The ladies gave a book social one night in the city hall, and the admission fee was a book. The number of books obtained in this way was 365 volumes.

They then placed the shelving in the room and subscribed for a number of magazines for one year. About this time the library was turned over to the city council. The mayor appointed the library board, an organizer was employed and a librarian elected. The library was formally opened November 23, 1838 with a musicale. The number of books was then 1030, present number 2675. At one time since the opening of the library the citizens raised \$1000. for the purpose of buying new books. The annual tax amounts to a little





over \$700. which is, however, hardly sufficient to pay the running expenses which do not include rent or light. The number of books issued in 1901 was 14606. No record is kept of books used in the library.

At Tuscola, the county seat of Douglas county the library movement was also started by the Woman's club. The ladies raised \$400. in the club and secured subscriptions for \$1200. They succeeded in securing the two mill tax which gives them over \$500. a year.

Ten or eleven years ago a library was started in Paxton. The young people's society of one of the churches originated the movement. By subscriptions enough money was raised to build a library room as an addition to the Methodist church, which is on a corner two blocks from the business centre of town. This was done with the understanding that the room was to be used for library purposes. There was a library association with the usual officers. By means of entertainments and various devices money was raised to buy books. Some were secured by a book social or were given from private libraries. Altogether there were about six hundred volumes. Periodicals and newspapers were donated. At first the library was kept open evenings and Saturday afternoons. The young people took turns in acting as librarian, each serving for two weeks at a time. One dollar a year was charged for the privilege of borrowing books and this was the only regular source of income. After the expenses of janitor, light, heat and insurance were paid this left little if any thing for the purchase of new books. For two or three years the library had a good circulation and the reading room was used a great deal. Then when the novelty had worn off the young people began to grow tired of keeping the room open and no one person



would undertake to do it. There was a great deal of complaint about the order in the room. Boys and girls found out that it was a good place to go to spend the evening and have a good time in a social way. Many of those in charge, being there only temporarily, did not feel much responsibility and did not exercise their authority to keep good order. Finally it was decided not to open the library in the evening, but rather to keep it open two afternoons in the week. All of the work at this time was done by a few people who deserve a great deal of credit for their perseverance. There being no additions to the library the circulation naturally grew less and with it the income decreased. People ceased to take any interest in it and at last in 1898 all of the books were turned over to the public school, to be cared for and circulated by it, the only condition being that if for any reason the school should not want the library it should be returned to the library association.

In 1899 another attempt was made to start a library in Paxton. This was a subscription library. The fee was three dollars. This library was shorter lived than the other, for the 250 books were this spring (1902) turned over to the public school library with the provision that those who had life memberships should always be allowed to draw books from it.

These two libraries have of course helped the school a great deal and since they could no longer exist alone the very best thing that could be done was to give them to the school where they may be used.

Some may say that since we have this school library of almost 2000 volumes which is being added to each year and from which books may be drawn by anyone, it is needless to start a new public library in which this one would probably be partly duplicated and which





would only be an added expense. The school library is an excellent thing for the school children. It is very well managed so that the teachers can supervise the reading of the children and considering its influence on and its value to the school the libraries which have been combined with it have been far from failures. But while the school library does such good work in the school it is of little or no value to the public and can not be expected to be. Work with the schools, while of great importance, is only a small part of the work of a public library. The books which have been purchased recently and are up to date have been bought with money raised by the school and selected for its special use rather than for a public library. There are of course a great many old, standard works which would be of use in a public library, but the recent books on live up-to-date questions are the ones that keep up the interest in a library and it is an exceptional reader who will continue to draw books very long from a collection of old standard works though their value is unquestioned. There are no periodicals and these form one of the best and most popular sources of information on all current subjects. If there were periodicals they would be of little use as there is no place in which to read or consult them and most of their value is in reference work so if they are to do any good they must be in a reading room which is accessible to all. There are some valuable reference books but as long as they must be used in a private office, not supposed to be open to the public, they are of no use to those outside of the school.

Then there is no one whose business it is to keep up interest in the library or induce people to use it as the librarian of a public library is bound to do. The books are issued by some of the



teachers who take their turn in staying there for about an hour each afternoon after school closes. Of course people might come and get books then, but they do not and are not likely to, so long as they must go to the school building.

When asked to contribute towards a new public library some may say "I have already helped to start two libraries in Paxton and they have both been failures. There is no reason why another library will be more of a success than they were." At first it would seem as if this were true and that it must be that the people do not want a library or they would have supported those, but on consideration of the subject, several reasons appear why these were not successful and why a free public library started now and supported by taxation would succeed.

When the library was started in the room joining the Methodist church money was raised both for books and to build a room. From the experience of other towns it has been proved that it is unwise to try to build a building at the same time that books are bought and unless a special gift for a building is secured, the better plan is to use all money for books and equipment and to rent a room until the library is well started and has been running smoothly for some time before trying to provide permanent quarters. If more money is raised at first than it seems necessary to expend on books at the time, which is not likely to be the case, it is better to keep the surplus as a fund which may be used to buy new books and so keep up the interest.

Also it had to depend upon the fees from borrowers for support. This was a very bad thing for two reasons. It did not bring in enough of an income to any more than pay the running expenses and



left nothing for the purchase of new books. No small library can hope to keep up its circulation very long unless some new books are purchased now and then to stimulate the interest of its patrons. Then the very fact that it was not a free public library and that the privilege of borrowing books had to be paid for undoubtedly kept a great many away. Miss Moore of the Scoville institute library, Oak Park says that the very first thing she has to do in persuading many people to use the library is to convince them that it will not cost them anything.

The location of the library in a church was very unfortunate. It was not far from the centre of town, but as the room was part of the church many people naturally had the idea that it was part of the Methodist church. This should not have been so, but however that may be, it was a fact. The fact that there was no one person in charge of the library was a great detriment to it. Those who kept it open, being there only two weeks at a time and never having had any experience, could do nothing more than charge and discharge the books.

The second library, which was owned by the Paxton library association had about the same difficulties to meet as the first. It was kept in a drug store so it was easy of access, but the fee was higher and there were fewer books. It too was without any regular income and had no librarian. There was no reading room in connection with it which may have been one reason it did not last longer.

The question of a free public library is not a new one in Paxton. It has been and is being discussed by different people who are interested in the building up of the town. But this may go on





indefinitely unless some one takes a definite step towards starting a library. In the majority of towns where libraries have been established the first movement in regard to the matter has originated in a woman's club or a union of the women's clubs. This seems the most appropriate place for a beginning. The woman's club is usually interested in the development of the educational facilities of the town. The object of the club is almost always self culture. The clubs will be likely to use the library more and receive more benefit from it than any other organized body. The women of the club are congenial and can work together harmoniously. They will have time to devote to raising funds and making plans for the library. They will have a wide influence in the town, reaching all the different churches and the school people. They have the tact and ability to get the movement launched smoothly and this will count for a great deal.

These things apply as well to the various clubs of Paxton as to those of any other town. Any one or all together might inaugurate a library movement and if they were to go about it in the right way they could get all of the people interested. That is the main point to get all the people interested enough to give not only their approval, but their financial aid. Every person who gives something, no matter how small the amount, is sure to keep up his interest and try to make the library a success. He will be more likely to use the library himself and encourage his family and friends to use it that he may get some return for what he has invested.

Supposing that the woman's club has talked over the situation and decided to try to found a public library in Paxton. The first



thing they must do is to arouse the interest of the whole town in favor of a library and they must continue to agitate the question and maintain the interest that has been aroused. The newspapers have been most valuable agencies in starting many small libraries. The editors of the papers in Paxton have always been very generous in giving space to any project which was for the improvement of the town and would certainly help this along. They have already published several articles in favor of a public library. They might give each week either a short article, on the need and possibilities of a library in Paxton, contributed by some one interested, or a reprint of some brief general article on the subject of libraries. Several of these which might be very effective are "extracts from papers and addresses" contained in a small pamphlet "Why do we need a public library" issued by the Publishing Board of the American Library Association. In Racine, Wis. the newspapers printed some such material as this every Saturday for two years. It took a long time, but in the end they were successful.

Much of the work of arousing the interest of the public must be done by individual effort. Every one who has any influence on any body of people must be prevailed upon to use it in behalf of the library. Business men, lawyers, ministers, teachers, laborers, men and women, young and old, all can help. The Swedish people must lend a hand in the movement or the library will not be representative of all the people and it is very essential that it shall be.

When the women have worked up a general interest in the subject and everyone understands that he will be expected to help start the library a committee should be selected. The members of this should not be from any one club, church or class, but they should





represent the different professions and classes of people. The committee should be pretty large in order that the field may be covered thoroughly and everyone given an opportunity to help. Fifteen would be a good number.

This committee should organize at once with a president, secretary and treasurer. They must first ascertain whether the mayor and members of the city council are willing to accept a library for the city and vote a tax to maintain it. If they are, and there is no doubt that they will be willing if the people want one, the committee can begin to work. Of course the first need is money to buy books and to equip the library. They must decide on how much they can reasonably expect to raise by subscription, not counting on any large special gift. \$2500. seems a very reasonable amount to expect. In order to work systematically they might adopt, in part, the plan of Mr. A. M. Pendleton given in Library Journal, vol. 1, p.161-62. They could secure a list of all the voters and make besides this an other list of all the women who have separate means. The list should be read in a meeting of the committee and each one should take the names of those with whom he is acquainted and will have the most influence. This will prevent the confusion which would otherwise occur with such a large committee.

Subscription blanks should be prepared. Then the different members should go to each person on their list and ask him to give what would be his fair proportion of \$2500. Those who are asking for subscriptions should be able to show the need of a public library in Paxton, give an idea of the benefit it would be to the people individually and collectively and convince each one of his or her responsibility in the matter. If each member of the committee does



his duty the \$2500. ought to be raised without much delay.

Having obtained the money, the next thing is the selection and purchase of the books. When it comes to this a small committee can work to much better advantage than a large one. Three people would be enough to select the books and they could work together much more harmonisously than a larger number. They should be persons who are broad minded, well read and not biased in their opinions. There are a great many lists and catalogs which would help them in their selection. Chief among these is the catalog of the A. L. A. library which may be obtained from the U. S. bureau of education. Of course this would have to be cut down a great deal and supplemented by newer and more up-to-date lists. The catalog of small libraries which are known to be good could be used to some extent. The lists of best books, issued annually for recent years, by the N. Y. state library, are good supplements to the A. L. A. catalog. They should also get different publishers' catalogs and using all these aids, try to make out a list of books suitable for the library and within the limit of what they have to spend. Allowing \$500. for the furniture and equipment of the room, \$2000. would be left for the purchase of books. The average cost of books in a library is estimated to be about \$1.25 each. Then about 1600 volumes could be bought at first.

In selecting the library care should be taken to have all classes of knowledge represented in their relative value to each other and to the people who are to use the books. Such a small library cannot afford to buy a book simply because it is a classic or a standard work without considering whether any one in the town has a use for it, or whether it will ever be of any benefit to the



people. There should be something there for everyone. Of course no trashy material should be admitted for in the place of every book of this character some good, useful, and interesting book will be kept out. A great many good books of travel and description, biography or popular science have been written in recent years and these prove very interesting as well as instructive and help to lessen the demand for fiction, so much of which is of no value. Besides books for instruction or reference and for culture there should be books for recreation. The mind as well as the body must have recreation and rest. Not to have a moderate amount of good fiction would be to deprive the public of its rights. Few of the more expensive books can be purchased, but an ample supply of reference works, dictionaries and encyclopaedias should be included.

The list of books, with editions and bindings specified, having been made, copies of it should be submitted to different publishers for their prices. When the books are received they should be compared with the invoice and with the original list.

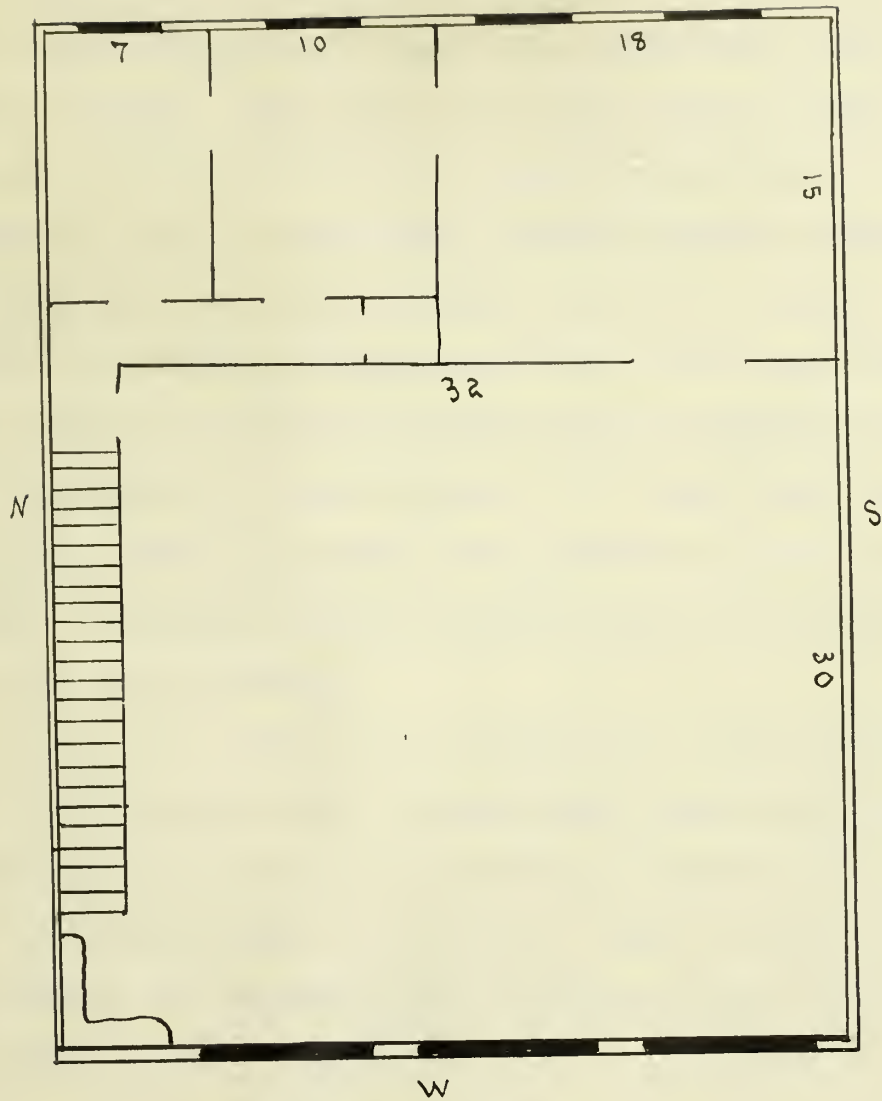
When the books have been turned over to the city the Mayor will, in accordance with the law, appoint the directors of the library. The next question is where the books are to be kept. As a usual thing a small town which has no building especially for the purpose uses a room in the city hall for the library. Paxton has a new city hall which is in an admirable place for a library, being on the main street down town. The first floor is divided into two rooms, one for the use of the fire department and the other for the office of the police magistrate. Neither of these rooms could be used for a library. The building faces West and the stairway goes up from the street. The council room occupies about two thirds of the





second floor and is in the front of the building. Back of it are three small rooms called committee rooms, but seldom if ever used for any purpose.





Plan of 2nd floor of City hall.





It seems a practical plan to take the present council room for a library and the small rooms back of it for council rooms. By removing the partition between the two rooms at the rear of the large room, a room 15 feet by 28 feet would be made. This would be large enough for the ordinary meetings of the council as there are only twelve aldermen and there are seldom more than three or four others present. The small room left could be used for a committee room. It is true that the back room would not be so large nor pleasant as the one now used, but the regular meetings of the city council occur only once a month and then at night. If it were thought best the council might reserve the room which they now have for their use on the nights of their regular meetings and have it closed to the public on those nights. By using this room for a library the rent would be saved, a very pleasant library and reading room would be obtained and the inconvenience to the members of the council would be very small.

If the plan of using the city hall for a library should not, for any reason, be approved by the council there are several other rooms down town which might be secured and fitted up to serve the purpose of a reading room and library. None of these, however, is so well lighted, so pleasant, nor so well adapted to the needs as the city hall.

According to the last report the assessed value of the taxable property in Paxton was \$423134. The two mill tax from this would bring to the library an annual income of \$846.26. By the practice of economy this would cover the expenses of the library and leave some money for new books. The first year the income would be used in organizing the library. It would be best to have a trained li-



brarian to organize and to have the person who is to be the librarian help in the organization. In this way the library will be started in the right way and the librarian will get sufficient training to take charge of the library after it is organized. The library would have no expenses of light or rent if it were in the city hall. The salary of the librarian would be about thirty dollars a month and that of the janitor about one hundred and twenty-five dollars a year. Other expenses would amount to about fifty dollars a year so that about three hundred dollars would be left for new books and periodicals. This would make the growth of the library slow, but the income will gradually increase and it might be augmented now and then by gifts or money raised by lectures and entertainments.

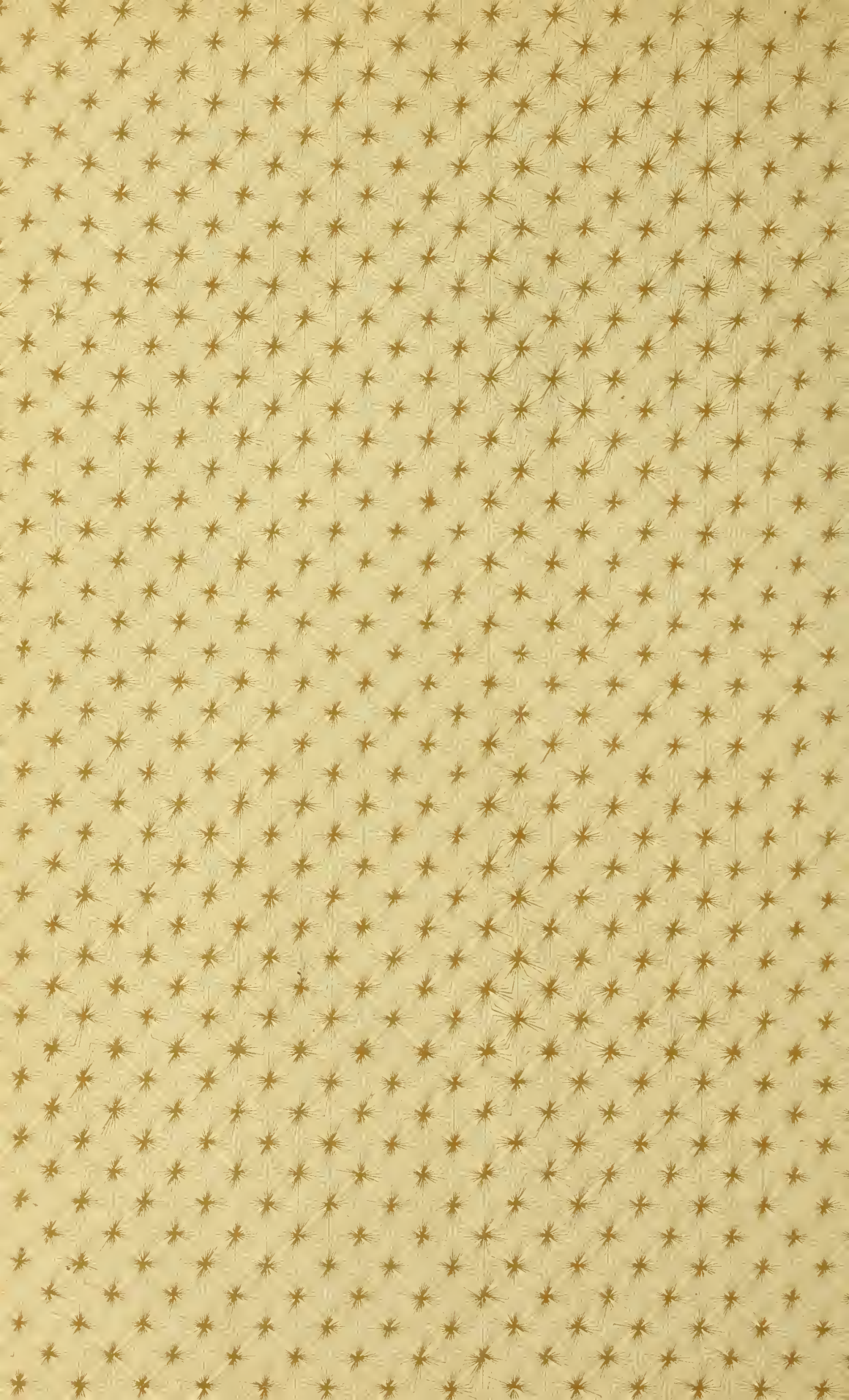
In this thesis there has been an attempt to outline a simple, direct, and business like way of going about the matter of establishing a public library in Paxton. Whether it is really a practical plan can only be proved by an actual trial. One thing which at present is the first plan suggested by most people when a library is spoken of, has not been considered here, and that is the possibility of a gift from Mr. Carnegie. A library given by him would of course be a very fine thing, and would be much less troublesome than to raise money by subscriptions from the citizens, but even Mr. Carnegie has not shown a disposition to give when the people of a town have made no attempt to help themselves, especially where they are well able to do so. It is indeed time that some definite step be taken unless Paxton wishes to be behind other towns of its size and many smaller ones.



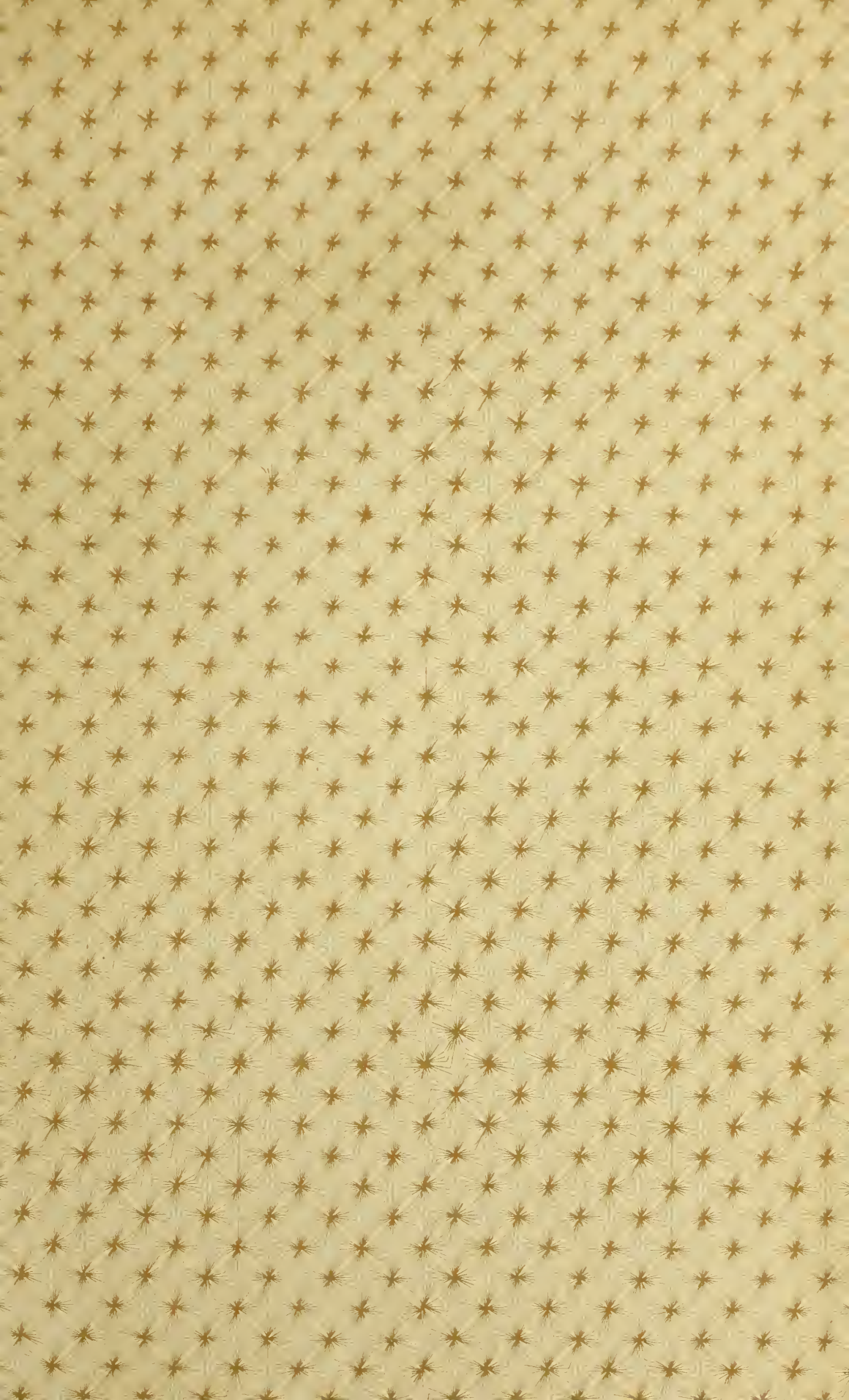
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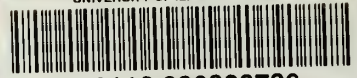








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